

***Watch Hill Fire District  
Watch Hill, RI 02891***

**PARK COMMISSION MEETING**

Thursday, July 28, 2016

4:00 p.m.

Fire Station

222 Watch Hill Road

Watch Hill, RI

A meeting of the Park Commission of the Watch Hill Fire District was held at the Watch Hill Fire Station at 4:00 p.m., Thursday, July 28, 2016.

The following members were present:

Grant G. Simmons III, Chairman

Elizabeth Bean

Jeanne Blasberg

John Felber

Dabney Pierce

District Council members present:

John M. Regan III, Deputy Moderator

Robert Peacock, Fire Chief

Legal Advisors present:

R. Jeffrey Knisley

Matthew H. Thomsen

Others Present:

Fire District Voters

Alicia Perrone

Proper notice having been given, the Chairman, Grant G. Simmons III, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Simmons began the meeting with a discussion of leases. Questions were raised regarding policies, putting leases out for bid, values of leases in association with property values. The reason for instituting an overall policy is for the benefit of the town to insure that the leases and properties are not undervalued. There are four short term leases to be reviewed every year. These include the Larking Road Parking lot, Merry-Go-Round, Bathhouse, and Docks. Some leases were noted to be as old as 2009 or 2010.

It was noted that DiSanto Priest would be the proper entity to put a value on the leases. It was requested that a sub-committee be set up for lease review.

Matthew H. Thomsen said that the Fire District is not set up to make money. It is set up to provide services at least cost possible. The Park Commission as a whole is tasked with managing the leases.

Some questions were raised with regard to Merry-Go-Round operations and how the tickets are issued. In response it was noted that tickets are generated by computer for the Merry-Go-Round and bathing beach. Controls have been put in place to avoid potential skimming.

With respect to the maintenance of the Merry-Go-Round and the horses being worked on, there are six being worked on (3 old/3 new). Mr. Simmons said that they came off this spring. The old horses are

rotated out and new ones put on. There are more horses than are actually flying. It was asked if there are controls in place for the horses that are not in use with regard to storage and insurance. In response, it was noted that The Mystic Seaport assisted with some of the maintenance. It was questioned whether or not changes in the lease should be included to have the lessee pay for some of the maintenance of the Merry-Go-Round. Major repairs should be also be defined and decided upon as to who pays for repairs other than labor. Mr. Simmons said that the Fire District is paying for maintenance at this time. A breakdown of expenses was requested.

With regard to the parking lot lease, Larkin Road LLC, the Watch Hill Fire District set up an LLC and is the sole member. Dabney Pierce noted that the LLC license was revoked. An LLC was created and filed with the Secretary of State to assist with unemployment insurance and to keep it at an arm's length from the Fire District. It was set up in 2014 and does not conflict with the charter.

George Nicholas spoke to the current condition of the public restroom and status of repairs thus far, the importance of ongoing maintenance of the Merry-Go-Round and the sea wall repair. While the liability that existed at the bathhouse had been remediated, it was his concern that all three still have issues that need to be addressed.

It was noted that some concerns regarding the Fire District parking lot need to be talked about, such as the lot being very chaotic with the rules not being enforced. Also mentioned was the fact that there are always cars in the residents' spots without the proper resident parking stickers affixed to the vehicles.

Finally, the Fire District voters voiced concerns about speeding and other various parking enforcement issues throughout the area. They would like to see a greater police presence. As well, they would like to see the Fire District utilize email in order to make people aware of upcoming meetings.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia S. Perrone  
Office Manager